
Stories of Mother West Wind

ILLUSTRATED BY DANIELA DRESCHER
WRITTEN BY THORNTON WALDO BURGESS



TREEMAGINATION

Mother West Wind's Magical World



Children's connection to the natural world is vital to their health and well being, and critical in shaping their ability to contribute constructively to the world community.

Through modernization and urbanization, children have, for over 150 years, been further and further removed from nature resulting in a wide spread "nature deficit disorder."

Treemagination wants to help reverse that trend through story telling; through audio stories and illustrated series like "Mother West Wind's Magical World".

For a moment children get to leave this noisy and hectic world and submerge their formative imaginations into a timeless world of natural beauty and truth.

Meet Johnny Chuck who finds the best thing in the world while Billy the Mink is having a Swimming Party. Find out who saves Mrs. Redwing speckled eggs and why Old Man Coyote has many voices. The stars of our adventures are the jovial Johnny Chuck, rascally Reddy Fox, cautious Bobby Coon, curious Peter Rabbit, wise Grandfather Frog, unhurried Jimmy Skunk, boastful Chatterer the Red Squirrel, dear Danny Meadow Mouse, stout Unc' Billy Possum, bossy Sammy Jay, cunning Blacky the Crow, fun loving Billy Mink, friendly Jerry Muskrat and Little Joe Otter and let's not forget Old Mother West Wind, the Laughing Brook, the Smiling Pool, the Merry Little Breezes, the Purple Hills and the Lone Little Path winding through the Green Meadows and wise old Mother Nature.

Thornton W. Burgess who shares his deep reverence for mother nature with his young listeners and readers got it right when he wrote stories about his local forests and meadows, brooks and ponds and all the little animals that live, nest and feed there. Through his stories children get to know and love animals and their habitat and learn important lessons from their lives and adventures: from problem solving to conflict resolution to the joy of discovery. They learn about the interconnected nature of community and the value each individual member brings to it. The animals are shown to live in a way rarely witnessed today -- in a whole and united world.

Their adventures will come alive via magical illustrations by renown children's book illustrator **Daniela Drescher** and audio books narrated by prominent and engaging voices and celebrities.



For Mother West Wind Audio Stories downloads go to www.audible.com

For a compilation CD of the Mother West Wind Audio Stories, please visit us at www.treemagination.com

Other available Stories

The Stranger in The Green Forest

The Willful Little Breeze

Billy Mink's Swimming Party

How Howler The Wolf Got His Name

Why Old Man Coyote Has Many Voices

The Willful Little Breeze

Striped Chipmunk's Pockets

Mrs. Redwing's Speckled Eggs

Treemagination

Beauty in Story and Play



Treemagination wants to inspire children, parents and teachers to cultivate imagination and knowledge, and elevate emotional and social engagement.

We believe that learning and playing is a source of social change.

Therefore, we share ideas and products that enlighten, educate, and entertain, but also build character, free will, increasing curiosity, and instilling a lifelong desire for learning.

Treemagination

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Daniela Drescher



Before I began to write and illustrate children's books I did therapeutic drawing and painting with children for many years. I then just kept painting until my pictures began to speak. Speak about the happiness and the longing that lay beyond the gates and in the wild hedges, meadows and forests ...

Those gates are sometimes ajar, sometimes hidden and barely visible – but they can always be opened with the key of phantasy – and behind the gates and in the forests and meadows hides the world of the little folks and the big miracles.

Nature is the infinite and magical realm from which my stories begin to emerge. I accompany the colors of my pictures with detailed portraits of nature in order to introduce the child to the ability of observing and understanding the world of plants and animals – and to introduce the child to the perception of nature's diverse population besides us. I want to keep the doors to this world open – I want to stimulate children's curiosity to participate with their own imagination and inner pictures and to encourage them to unfold and form their own.

I live with my husband and four children in southwest Germany, on the Swabian Alb, surrounded by a colorful magical garden, forests and fields.

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Thornton Waldo Burgess



Thornton W. Burgess (1874-1965), naturalist and conservationist, loved the beauty of nature and its living creature so much that he wrote about them for 50 years. By the time he retired, he had written more than 170 books and 15,000 stories for daily columns in newspapers.

Many of his outdoor observations in nature were used as plots for his stories. In his first book, *Old Mother West Wind*, published in 1910, the reader meets

many of the characters found in later books and stories. These characters include Peter Rabbit, Jimmy Skunk, Sammy Jay, Bobby Raccoon, Joe Otter, Grandfather Frog, Billy Mink, Jerry Muskrat, Spotty the Turtle and of course, Old Mother West Wind and her Merry Little Breezes.

For the next fifty years, Burgess steadily wrote books that were published around the world in many languages, including Swedish, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Gaelic. Collaborating with him was his illustrator and friend, Harrison Cady of New York and Rockport, Massachusetts.

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Mrs. Redwing's Speckled Eggs



Old Mother West Wind came down from the Purple Hills in the golden light of the early morning. Over her shoulders was slung a bag - a great big bag - and in the bag were all of Old Mother West Wind's children, the Merry Little Breezes. Old Mother West Wind came down from the Purple Hills to the Green Meadows, and as she walked she crooned a song:

Mrs. Redwing's
Speckled Eggs
Preview



Shiva Rose

Ships upon the ocean wait -
I must hurry, hurry on!
Mills are idle if I'm late -
I must hurry, hurry on!

When she reached the Green Meadows, Old Mother West Wind opened her bag, turned it upside down and shook it. Out tumbled all the Merry Little Breezes and began to spin round and round for very joy, for you see they were to play in the Green Meadows all day long until Old Mother West Wind should come back at night and take them all to their home behind the Purple Hills.

First they raced over to see Johnny Chuck. They found Johnny Chuck sitting just outside his door eating his breakfast. One, for very mischief, snatched right out of Johnny Chuck's mouth the green leaf of corn he was eating, and ran away with it. Another playfully pulled his whiskers, while a third rumped up his hair.

Johnny Chuck pretended to be very cross indeed, but really he didn't mind a bit, for Johnny Chuck loved the Merry Little Breezes and played with them every day.

And if they teased Johnny Chuck they were good to him, too. When they saw Farmer Brown coming across the Green Meadows with a gun, one of them would dance over to Johnny Chuck and whisper to him that Farmer Brown was coming, and then Johnny Chuck would hide away, deep down in his snug little house underground, and Farmer Brown would wonder and wonder why it was that he never, never could get near enough to shoot Johnny Chuck. But he never, never could.

When the Merry Little Breezes left Johnny Chuck, they raced across the Green Meadows to the Smiling Pool to say good morning to Grandfather Frog, who sat on a big lily pad watching for green flies for breakfast.

"Chugarum," said Grandfather Frog, which was his way of saying good morning.

Just then along came a fat green fly and up jumped Grandfather Frog. When he sat down again on the lily pad the fat green fly was nowhere to be seen, but Grand-



father Frog looked very well satisfied indeed as he contentedly rubbed his white waistcoat with one hand.

"What is the news, Grandfather Frog?" cried the Merry Little Breezes.

"Mrs. Redwing has a new speckled egg in her nest in the bulrushes," said Grandfather Frog.

"We must see it," cried the Merry Little Breezes, and away they all ran to the swamp where the bulrushes grow.

Now someone else had heard of Mrs. Redwing's little nest in the bulrushes, and he had started out bright and early that morning to try to find it, for he wanted to steal the little speckled eggs just because they were pretty. It was Tommy Brown, the farmer's boy.

When the Merry Little Breezes reached the swamp where the bulrushes grow they found poor Mrs. Redwing in great distress. She was afraid that Tommy Brown would find her little nest, for he was very, very near it, and his eyes were very, very sharp.

"Oh," cried the Merry Little Breezes, "we must help Mrs. Redwing save her pretty speckled eggs from bad Tommy Brown!"

So one of the Merry Little Breezes whisked Tommy Brown's old straw hat off his head over into the Green Meadows. Of course Tommy ran after it. Just as he stooped to pick it up another little Breeze ran away with it. Then they took turns, first one little Breeze, then another little Breeze running away with the old straw hat just as Tommy Brown would almost get his hands on it. Down past the Smiling Pool and across the Laughing Brook they raced and chased the old straw hat, Tommy Brown running after it, very cross, very red in the face, and breathing very hard. Way across the Green Meadows they ran to the edge of the wood, where they hung the old straw hat in the middle of a thorn tree. By the time Tommy Brown had it once more on his head he had forgotten all about Mrs. Redwing and



her little nest. Besides, he heard the breakfast horn blowing just then, so off he started for home up the Lone Little Path through the wood.

And all the Merry Little Breezes danced away across the Green Meadows to the swamp where the bulrushes grow to see the new speckled egg in the little nest where Mrs. Redwing was singing for joy. And while she sang the Merry Little Breezes danced among the bulrushes, for they knew, and Mrs. Redwing knew, that someday out of that pretty new speckled egg would come a wee baby Redwing.



Striped Chipmunk's Pockets



It was one of Striped Chipmunk's busy days. Every day is a busy day with Striped Chipmunk at this season of the year, for the sweet acorns are ripe and the hickory nuts rattle down whenever Old Mother West Wind shakes the trees, while every night Jack Frost opens chestnut burrs just to see the squirrels scamper for the plump brown nuts the next morning.

**Striped Chipmunk's Pockets
Preview**



Radha Mitchell

So Striped Chipmunk was very busy, very busy indeed! He whisked in and out of the old stone wall along one edge of the Green Meadows. Back and forth, back and forth, sometimes to the old hickory tree, sometimes to the hollow chestnut tree, sometimes to the great oak on the edge of the Green Forest Striped Chipmunk scampered.

Old Mother West Wind, coming down from the Purple Hills very early in the morning, had found Striped Chipmunk up before her and hard at work. Later, when jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had climbed up into the sky, the Merry Little Breezes had spied Striped Chipmunk whisking along the old stone wall and had raced over to play with him, for the Merry Little Breezes are very fond of Striped Chipmunk. They got there just in time to see him disappear under a great stone in the old wall. In a minute he was out again and off as fast as he could go to the old hickory tree.

"Oh, Striped Chipmunk, come play with us," shouted the Merry Little Breezes, running after him.

But Striped Chipmunk just flirted his funny little tail and winked with both his bright eyes at them.

"Busy! busy! busy!" said Striped Chipmunk, hurrying along as fast as his short legs could take him.

The Merry Little Breezes laughed, and one of them, dancing ahead, pulled the funny little tail of Striped Chipmunk.

"It's a beautiful day; do come and play with us," cried the Merry Little Breeze.

But Striped Chipmunk flirted his tail over his back once more.

"Busy! busy! busy!" he shouted over his shoulder and ran faster than ever.

In a few minutes he was back again, but such a queer-looking fellow as he was! His head was twice as big as it had been before and you would hardly have known that it was Striped Chipmunk but for the saucy way he twitched his funny little tail and the spry way he scampered along the old stone wall.

"Oh, Striped Chipmunk's got the mumps!" shouted the Merry Little Breezes.

But Striped Chipmunk said never a word. He couldn't. He ran faster than ever until he disappeared under the big stone. When he popped his head out again he was just his usual saucy little self.

"Say, Striped Chipmunk," cried the Merry Little Breezes, rushing over to him, "tell us how you happen to have pockets in your cheeks."

But Striped Chipmunk just snapped his bright eyes at them and said "Busy! busy! busy!" as he scuttled over to the hollow chestnut tree.

The Merry Little Breezes saw that it was no use at all to try to tempt Striped Chipmunk to play with them or to answer questions.

"I tell you what," cried one, "let's go ask Great-Grandfather Frog how Striped Chipmunk happens to have pockets in his cheeks. He'll know."

So away they started, after they had raced over to the big hollow chestnut tree and sent a shower of brown nuts rattling down to Striped Chipmunk from the burrs that Jack Frost had opened the night before.

"Good-bye, Striped Chipmunk," they shouted as they romped across the Green Meadows. And Striped Chipmunk stopped long enough to shout "Good-bye" before he filled his pockets with the brown nuts.

Old Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily pad blinking in the sun. It was very still, very, very still indeed. Suddenly out of the brown bulrushes burst the Merry Little Breezes and surrounded old Grandfather Frog. And every one of them had brought to him a fat, foolish, green fly.

Grandfather's big goggly eyes sparkled and he gave a funny little hop up into the air as he caught each foolish green fly. When the last one was safely inside his white and yellow waistcoat he settled himself comfortably on the big green lily pad and folded his hands over the foolish green flies.

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog. "What is it you want this morning?"

"Oh, Grandfather Frog," cried the Merry Little Breezes, "tell us how it happens that Striped Chipmunk has pockets in his cheeks. Do tell us, Grandfather Frog. Please do!"

"Chug-a-rum," said Grandfather Frog. "How should I know?"

"But you do know, Grandfather Frog, you know you do. Please tell us!" cried the Merry Little Breezes as they settled themselves among the rushes.

And presently Grandfather Frog began:

"Once upon a time—a long, long while ago—"

"When the world was young?" asked a mischievous little Breeze.

Grandfather Frog pretended to be very much put out by the interruption, and tried to look very severe. But the Merry Little Breezes were all giggling, so that presently he had to smile too.

"Yes," said he, "it was when the world was young, before old King Bear became king. Mr. Chipmunk, Striped Chipmunk's great-great-great-grandfather a thousand times removed, was the smallest of the squirrels, just as Striped Chipmunk is now. But he didn't mind that, not the least little bit. Mr. Gray Squirrel was four times as big and had a handsome tail, Mr. Fox Squirrel was four times as big and he also had a handsome tail, Mr. Red Squirrel was twice as big and he thought his tail was very good to see.

But Mr. Chipmunk didn't envy his big cousins their fine tails; not he! You see he had himself a beautiful striped coat of which he was very proud and which he thought much more to be desired than a big tail.

"So Mr. Chipmunk went his way happy and contented and he was such a merry little fellow and so full of fun and cut such funny capers that everybody loved Mr. Chipmunk.

"One day, when the nights were cool and all the trees had put on their brilliant colors, old Mother Nature sent word down across the Green Meadows that every squirrel should gather for her and store away until she came a thousand nuts. Now the squirrels had grown fat and lazy through the long summer, all but Mr. Chipmunk, who frisked about so much that he had no chance to grow fat.

"Mr. Gray Squirrel grumbled. Mr. Fox Squirrel grumbled. Mr. Red Squirrel grumbled. But they didn't dare disobey old Mother Nature, so they all set out,

each to gather a thousand nuts. And Mr. Chipmunk alone was pleasant and cheerful.

"When they reached the nut trees, what do you suppose they discovered? Why, that they had been so greedy that they had eaten most of the nuts and it was going to be hard work to find and store a thousand nuts for old Mother Nature. Then they began to hurry, did Mr. Gray Squirrel and Mr. Fox Squirrel and Mr. Red Squirrel, each trying to make sure of his thousand nuts. They quarreled and they fought over the nuts on the ground and even up in the trees. And because they were so big and so strong, they pushed Mr. Chipmunk this way and they pushed him that way and often just as he was going to pick up a fat nut one of them would knock him over and make off with the prize.



"Poor Mr. Chipmunk kept his temper and was as polite as ever, but how he did work! His cousins are great climbers and could get the nuts still left on the trees, but Mr. Chipmunk is a poor climber, so he had to be content with those on the ground. Of course he could carry only one nut at a time and his legs were so short that he had to run as fast as ever he could to store each nut in his secret store-house and get back for another. And while the others quarreled and fought, he hurried back and forth, back and forth, from early morning until jolly, round, red Mr. Sun pulled his night cap on behind the Purple Hills, hunting for nuts and putting them away in his secret store-house.

"But the nuts grew scarcer and scarcer on the ground and harder to find, for the other squirrels were picking them up too, and then they did not have so far to carry them.

"Sometimes one of his cousins up in the trees would drop a nut, but Mr. Chipmunk never would take it, not even when he was having hard work to find any, 'for,' said he to himself, 'if my cousin drops a nut, it is his nut just the same.'

"Finally Mr. Gray Squirrel announced that he had got his thousand nuts. Then Mr. Fox Squirrel announced that he had got his thousand nuts. The next day Mr. Red Squirrel stopped hunting because he had his thousand nuts.

"But Mr. Chipmunk had hardly more than half as many. And that night he made a dreadful discovery—some one had found his secret store-house and had stolen some of his precious nuts.

"'It's of no use to cry over what can't be helped,' said Mr. Chipmunk, and the next morning he bravely started out again. He had worked so hard that he had grown thinner and thinner until now he was only a shadow of his old self. But he was as cheerful as ever and kept right on hunting and hunting for stray nuts. Mr. Gray Squirrel and Mr. Fox Squirrel and Mr. Red Squirrel sat around and rested and made fun of him. Way up in the tops of the tallest trees a few nuts still clung, but his cousins did not once offer to go up and shake them down for Mr. Chipmunk.

"And then old Mother Nature came down across the Green Meadows. First Mr. Gray Squirrel took her to his storehouse and she counted his thousand nuts. Then Mr. Fox Squirrel led her to his storehouse and she counted his thousand nuts. Then Mr. Red Squirrel showed her his store-house and she counted his thousand nuts.

"Last of all Mr. Chipmunk led her to his secret store-house and showed her the pile of nuts he had worked so hard to get. Old Mother Nature didn't need to count them to see that there were not a thousand there.

"'I've done the best I could,' said Mr. Chipmunk bravely, and he trembled all over, he was so tired.

"Old Mother Nature said never a word but went out on the Green Meadows and sent the Merry Little Breezes to call together all the little meadow people and all the little forest folks. When they had all gathered before her she suddenly turned to Mr. Gray Squirrel.

"Go bring me a hundred nuts from your store-house,' said she.

"Then she turned to Mr. Fox Squirrel.

"Go bring me a hundred nuts from your store-house,' said she.

"Last of all she called Mr. Red Squirrel out where all could see him. Mr. Red Squirrel crept out very slowly. His teeth chattered and his tail, of which he was so proud, dragged on the ground, for you see Mr. Red Squirrel had something on his mind.

"Then old Mother Nature told how she had ordered each squirrel to get and store for her a thousand nuts. She told just how selfish Mr. Gray Squirrel and Mr. Fox Squirrel had been. She told just how hard Mr. Chipmunk had worked and then she told how part of his precious store had been stolen.



"And there,' said old Mother Nature in a loud voice so that every one should hear, 'there is the thief!'

"Then she commanded Mr. Red Squirrel to go to his store-house and bring her half of the biggest and best nuts he had there!

"Mr. Red Squirrel sneaked off with his head hanging, and began to bring the nuts. And as he tramped back and forth, back and forth, all the little meadow people and all the little forest folks pointed their fingers at him and cried 'Thief! Thief! Thief! Thief!'

"When all the nuts had been brought to her by Mr. Gray Squirrel and Mr. Fox Squirrel and Mr. Red Squirrel, old Mother Nature gathered them all up and put them in the secret store-house of Mr. Chipmunk. Then she set Mr. Chipmunk up on an old stump where all could see him and she said:

"Mr. Chipmunk, because you have been faithful, because you have been cheerful, because you have done your best, henceforth you shall have two pockets, one in each cheek, so that you can carry two nuts at once, that you may not have to work so hard the next time I tell you to store a thousand nuts.'

"And all the little meadow people and all the little forest folks shouted 'Hurrah for Mr. Chipmunk!' All but his cousins, Mr. Gray Squirrel and Mr. Fox Squirrel and Mr. Red Squirrel, who hid themselves for shame.

"And ever since that time long ago, when the world was young, the Chipmunks have had pockets in their cheeks.

"You can't fool old Mother Nature," concluded Great-Grandfather Frog. "No, Sir, you can't fool old Mother Nature and it's no use to try."

"Thank you, thank you," cried the Merry Little Breezes, clapping their hands. Then they all raced across the Green Meadows to shake down some more nuts for Striped Chipmunk.



The Willful Little Breeze



Old Mother West Wind was tired - tired and just a wee bit cross - cross because she was tired. She had had a very busy day. Ever since early morning she had been puffing out the white sails of the ships on the big ocean to make them go faster. She had kept all the big and little windmills whirling and whirling to pump water for thirsty folks and grind corn for hungry folks. She had blown away all the smoke from tall chimneys

**The Willful Little
Breeze Preview**



Mia Maestro

and engines and steamboats. Yes, indeed, Old Mother West Wind had been very, very busy.

Now she was coming across the Green Meadows on her way to her home behind the Purple Hills, and as she came she opened the big bag she carried and called to her children, the Merry Little Breezes, who had been playing hard on the Green Meadows all the long day. One by one they crept into the big bag, for they were tired, too, and ready to go to their home behind the Purple Hills.

Pretty soon all were in the bag but one, a willful little Breeze who was not quite ready to go home. He wanted to play just a little longer. He danced ahead of Old Mother West Wind. He kissed the sleepy daisies. He shook the nodding buttercups. He set all the little poplar leaves a-dancing, too, and he wouldn't come into the big bag.

So Old Mother West Wind closed the big bag and slung it over her shoulder. Then she started on towards her home behind the Purple Hills.

When she had gone the willful little Breeze left behind suddenly felt very lonely - very lonely indeed! The sleepy daisies didn't want to play. The nodding buttercups were cross. Great round, bright Mr. Sun, who had been shining and shining all day long, went to bed and put on his nightcap of golden clouds. Black shadows came creeping, creeping out into the Green Meadows.

The willful little Breeze began to wish that he was safe in Old Mother West Wind's big bag with all the other Merry Little Breezes.

So he started across the Green Meadows to find the Purple Hills. But all the hills were black now and he could not tell which he should look behind to find his home with Old Mother West Wind and the Merry Little Breezes. How he did wish that he had minded Old Mother West Wind!

By and by he curled up under a bayberry bush and tried to go to sleep, but he was lonely - oh so lonely! - and he couldn't go to sleep. Old Mother Moon came up and flooded all the Green Meadows with light, but it wasn't like the bright light of jolly round Mr. Sun, for it was cold and white and it made many black shadows.

Pretty soon the willful little Breeze heard Hooty the Owl out hunting for a meadow mouse for his dinner. Then down the Lone Little Path which ran close to the bayberry bush trotted Reddy Fox. He was trotting very softly and every minute or so he turned his head and looked behind him to see if he was followed. It was plain to see that Reddy Fox was bent on mischief.

When he reached the bayberry bush Reddy Fox sat down and barked twice. Hooty the Owl answered him at once and flew over to join him. They didn't see the willful little Breeze curled up under the bayberry bush, so intent were these two rogues in plotting mischief. They were planning to steal down across the Green Meadows to the edge of the Brown Pasture, where Mr. Bob White and pretty Mrs. Bob White and a dozen little Bob Whites had their home.

"When they run along the ground I'll catch 'em, and when they fly up in the air you'll catch 'em, and we'll gobble 'em all up," said Reddy Fox to Hooty the Owl. Then he licked his chops and Hooty the Owl snapped his bill, just as if they were tasting tender little Bob Whites that very minute. It made the willful little Breeze shiver to see them. Pretty soon they started on towards the Brown Pasture.

When they were out of sight the willful little Breeze jumped up and shook himself. Then away he sped across the Green Meadows to the Brown Pasture. And because he could go faster and because he went a shorter way, he got there first. He had to hunt and hunt to find Mrs. and Mr. Bob White and all the little Bob Whites, but finally he did find them, all with their heads tucked under their wings fast asleep.

The willful little Breeze shook Mr. Bob White very gently. In an instant he was wide awake.

"Sh-h-h," said the willful little Breeze. "Reddy Fox and Hooty the Owl are coming to the Brown Pasture to gobble up you and Mrs. Bob White and all the little Bob Whites."

"Thank you, little Breeze," said Mr. Bob White. "I think I'll move my family."

Then he woke Mrs. Bob White and all the little Bob Whites. With Mr. Bob White in the lead, away they all flew to the far side of the Brown Pasture, where

they were soon safely hidden under a juniper tree. The willful little Breeze saw them safely there, and when they were nicely hidden hurried back to the place where the Bob Whites had been sleeping. Reddy Fox was stealing up through the grass very, very softly. Hooty the Owl was flying as silently as a shadow. When Reddy Fox thought he was near enough he drew himself together, made a quick spring, and landed right in Mr. Bob White's empty bed. Reddy Fox and Hooty the Owl looked so surprised and foolish when they found that the Bob Whites were not there that the willful little Breeze nearly laughed out loud.

Then Reddy Fox and Hooty the Owl hunted here and hunted there, all over the Brown Pasture, but they couldn't find the Bob Whites.

And the willful little Breeze went back to the juniper tree and curled himself up beside Mr. Bob White to sleep, for he was lonely no longer.



The Stranger in the Green Forest



Old Mother West Wind, hurrying down from the Purple Hills with her Merry Little Breezes, discovered the newcomer in the Green Forest on the edge of the Green Meadows. Of course the Merry Little Breezes saw him, too, and as soon as Old Mother West Wind had turned them loose on the Green Meadows they started out to spread the news.

As they hurried along the Crooked Little Path up the hill, they met Reddy Fox.

**The Stranger in
the Green Forest
Preview**



David Suzuki

"Oh, Reddy Fox," cried the Merry Little Breezes, so excited that all talked together, "there's a stranger in the Green Forest!"

Reddy Fox sat down and grinned at the Merry Little Breezes. The grin of Reddy Fox is not pleasant. It irritates and exasperates. It made the Merry Little Breezes feel very uncomfortable.

"You don't say so," drawled Reddy Fox. "Do you mean to say that you've just discovered him? Why, your news is so old that it is stale; it is no news at all. I thought you had something really new to tell me."

The Merry Little Breezes were disappointed. Their faces fell. They had thought it would be such fun to carry the news through the Green Forest and over the Green Meadows, and now the very first one they met knew all about it.

"Who is he, Reddy Fox?" asked one of the Merry Little Breezes.

Reddy Fox pretended not to hear. "I must be going," said he, rising and stretching. "I have an engagement with Billy Mink down at the Smiling Pool."

Reddy Fox started down the Crooked Little Path while the Merry Little Breezes hurried up the Crooked Little Path to tell the news to Jimmy Skunk, who was looking for beetles for his breakfast.

Now Reddy Fox had not told the truth. He had known nothing whatever of the stranger in the Green Forest. In fact he had been as surprised as the Merry Little Breezes could have wished, but he would not show it. And he had told another untruth, for he had no intention of going down to the Smiling Pool. No, indeed! He just waited until the Merry Little Breezes were out of sight, then he slipped into the Green Forest to look for the stranger seen by the Merry Little Breezes.

Now Reddy Fox does nothing openly. Instead of walking through the Green Forest like a gentleman, he sneaked along under the bushes and crept from tree to tree, all the time looking for the stranger of whom the Merry Little Breezes had told him. All around through the Green Forest sneaked Reddy Fox, but nothing of the stranger could he see. It didn't occur to him to look anywhere but on the ground.

"I don't believe there is a stranger here," said Reddy to himself.

Just then he noticed some scraps of bark around the foot of a tall maple. Looking up to see where it came from he saw—what do you think? Why, the stranger who had come to the Green Forest. Reddy Fox dodged back out of sight, for he wanted to find out all he could about the stranger before the stranger saw him.

Reddy sat down behind a big stump and rubbed his eyes. He could hardly believe what he saw. There at the top of the tall maple, stripping the branches of their bark and eating it, was the stranger, sure enough. He was big, much bigger than Reddy. Could he be a relative of Happy Jack Squirrel? He didn't look a bit, not the least little bit like Happy Jack. And he moved slowly, very slowly, indeed, while Happy Jack and his cousins move quickly. Reddy decided that the stranger could not be related to Happy Jack.

The longer Reddy looked the more he was puzzled. Also, Reddy began to feel just a little bit jealous. You see all the little meadow people and forest folks are afraid of Reddy Fox, but this stranger was so big that Reddy began to feel something very like fear in his own heart.

The Merry Little Breezes had told the news to Jimmy Skunk and then hurried over the Green Meadows telling every one they met of the stranger in the Green Forest—Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter, Johnny Chuck, Peter Rabbit, Happy Jack Squirrel, Danny Meadow Mouse, Striped Chipmunk, old Mr. Toad, Grandfather Frog, Sammy Jay, Blacky the Crow, and each as soon as he heard the news started for the Green Forest to welcome the newcomer. Even Grandfather Frog left his beloved big, green lily-pad and started for the Green Forest.

So it was that when finally the stranger decided that he had eaten enough bark for his breakfast, and climbed slowly down the tall maple, he found all the little meadow people and forest folks sitting in a big circle waiting for him. The stranger was anything but handsome, but his size filled them with respect. The nearer he got to the ground the bigger he looked. Down he came, and Reddy Fox, noting how slow and clumsy in his movements was the stranger, decided that there was nothing to fear.

If the stranger was slow and clumsy in the tree, he was clumsier still on the ground. His eyes were small and dull. His coat was rough, long and almost black. His legs were short and stout. His tail was rather short and broad. Altogether he was anything but handsome. But when the little meadow people and forest folks saw his huge front teeth they regarded him with greater respect than ever, all but Reddy Fox.

Reddy strutted out in front of him. "Who are you?" he demanded.

The stranger paid no attention to Reddy Fox.

"What business have you in our Green Forest?" demanded Reddy, showing all his teeth.

The stranger just grunted and appeared not to see Reddy Fox. Reddy swelled himself out until every hair stood on end and he looked twice as big as he really is. He strutted back and forth in front of the stranger.

"Don't you know that I'm afraid of nothing and nobody?" snarled Reddy Fox.

The stranger refused to give him so much as a glance. He just grunted and kept right on about his business. All the little meadow people and forest folks began to giggle and then to laugh. Reddy knew that they were laughing at him and he grew very angry, for no one likes to be laughed at, least of all Reddy Fox.

"You're a pig!" taunted Reddy. "You're afraid to fight. I bet you're afraid of Danny Meadow Mouse!"

Still the stranger just grunted and paid no further attention to Reddy Fox.

Now, with all his boasting Reddy Fox had kept at a safe distance from the stranger. Happy Jack Squirrel had noticed this. "If you're so brave, why don't you drive him out, Reddy Fox?" asked Happy Jack, skipping behind a tree. "You don't dare to!"

Reddy turned and glared at Happy Jack. "I'm not afraid!" he shouted. "I'm not afraid of anything nor anybody!"

But though he spoke so bravely it was noticed that he went no nearer the stranger.

Now it happened that that morning Bowser the Hound took it into his head to take a walk in the Green Forest. Blacky the Crow, sitting on the tiptop of a big pine, was the first to see him coming. From pure love of mischief Blacky waited until Bowser was close to the circle around the stranger. Then he gave the alarm.

"Here's Bowser the Hound! Run!" screamed Blacky the Crow. Then he laughed so that he had to hold his sides to see the fright down below. Reddy Fox forgot that he was afraid of nothing and nobody. He was the first one out of sight, running so fast that his feet seemed hardly to touch the ground. Peter Rabbit turned a back somersault and suddenly remembered that he had important business down on the Green Meadows. Johnny Chuck dodged into a convenient hole. Billy Mink ran into a hollow tree. Striped Chipmunk hid in an old stump.

Happy Jack Squirrel climbed the nearest tree. In a twinkling the stranger was alone, facing Bowser the Hound.

Bowser stopped and looked at the stranger in sheer surprise. Then the hair on the back of his neck stood on end and he growled a deep, ugly growl. Still the stranger did not run. Bowser didn't know just what to make of it. Never before had he had such an experience. Could it be that the stranger was not afraid of him? Bowser walked around the stranger, growling fiercely. As he walked the stranger turned, so as always to face him. It was perplexing and very provoking. It really seemed as if the stranger had no fear of him.

"Bow, wow, wow!" cried Bowser the Hound in his deepest voice, and sprang at the stranger.

Then something happened, so surprising that Blacky the Crow lost his balance on the top of the pine where he was watching. The instant that Bowser sprang, the stranger rolled himself into a tight round ball and out of the long hair of his coat sprang hundreds of sharp little yellowish white barbed spears. The stranger looked for all the world like a huge black and yellow chestnut burr.

Bowser the Hound was as surprised as Blacky the Crow. He stopped short and his eyes looked as if they would pop out of his head. He looked so puzzled and so funny that Happy Jack Squirrel laughed aloud.

The stranger did not move. Bowser backed away and began to circle around again, sniffing and snuffing. Once in a while he barked. Still the stranger did not move. For all the sign of life he made he might in truth have been a giant chestnut burr.

Bowser sat down and looked at him. Then he walked around to the other side and sat down. "What a queer thing," thought Bowser. "What a very queer thing."

Bowser took a step nearer. Then he took another step. Nothing happened.

Finally Bowser reached out, and with his nose gingerly touched the prickly ball. Slap! The stranger's tail had struck Bowser full in the face.

Bowser yelled with pain and rolled over and over on the ground. Sticking in his tender lips were a dozen sharp little spears, and claw and rub at them as he would, Bowser could not get them out. Every time he touched them he yelped with pain. Finally he gave it up and started for home with his tail between his legs like a whipped puppy, and with every step he yelped.

When he had disappeared and his yelps had died away in the distance, the stranger unrolled, the sharp little spears disappeared in the long hair of his coat and, just as if nothing at all had happened, the stranger walked slowly over to a tall maple and began to climb it.

And this is how Prickly Porky the Porcupine came to the Green Forest, and won the respect and admiration of all the little meadow people and forest folks, including Reddy Fox. Since that day no one has tried to meddle with Prickly Porky or his business.



How Howler the Wolf Got His Name



Peter Rabbit never had seen Howler the Wolf, but he had heard his voice in the distance, and the mere sound had given him cold shivers. It just went all through him. It was very different from the voice of Old Man Coyote. The latter is bad enough, sounding as it does like many voices, but there is not in it that terrible fierceness which the voice of his big cousin contains. Peter had no desire to hear it any nearer. The first

How Howler the
Wolf Got His
Name

Preview



Peter Mensah

time he met his cousin, Jumper the Hare, he asked him about Howler, for Jumper had come down to the Green Forest from the Great Woods where Howler lives and is feared.

"Did you hear him?" exclaimed Jumper. "I hope he won't take it into his head to come down here. I don't believe he will, because it is too near the homes of men. If the sound of his voice way off there gave you cold shivers, I'm afraid you'd shake all to pieces if you heard him close by. He's just as fierce as his voice sounds. There is one thing about him that I like, though, and that is that he gives fair warning when he is hunting. He doesn't come sneaking about without a sound, like Tufty the Lynx. He hunts like Bowser the Hound and lets you know that he is out hunting. Did you ever hear how he got his name?"

"No. How did he get his name?" asked Peter eagerly.

"Well, of course it's a family name now and is handed down and has been for years and years, ever since the first Wolf began hunting way back when the world was young," explained Jumper. "For a long time the first Wolf had no name. Most of the other animals and birds had names, but nothing seemed to just fit the big gray Wolf. He looked a great deal like his cousin, Mr. Dog, and still more like his other cousin, Mr. Coyote. But he was stronger than either, could run farther and faster than either, and had quite as wonderful a nose as either.

"With Mr. Wolf, as with all the other animals, life was an easy matter at first. There was plenty to eat, and everybody was on good terms with everybody else. But there came a time, as you know, when food became scarce. It was then that the big learned to hunt the small, and fear was born into the world. Mr. Wolf was swift of leg and keen of nose. His teeth were long and sharp, and he was so strong that there were few he feared to fight with. In fact, he didn't know fear at all, for he simply kept out of the way of those who were too big and strong for him to fight.

"Most people like to do the things they know they can do well. Mr. Wolf early learned the joy of hunting. I can't understand it myself. Can you?"

Peter shook his head. You see neither Jumper nor Peter ever have hunted any one in all their lives. It is always they who are hunted.



"Perhaps it was because he was so strong of wind and leg that he enjoyed running, and because he was so keen of nose that he enjoyed following a trail. Anyway, he scorned to spend his time sneaking about as did his cousin, Mr. Coyote, but chose to follow the swiftest runners and to match his nose and speed and skill against their speed and wits. He didn't bother to hunt little people like us when there were big people like Mr. Deer. The longer and harder the hunt, the more Mr. Wolf seemed to enjoy it.

"At first he hunted silently, running swiftly with his nose to the ground. But this gave the ones he hunted very little chance; he was upon them before they even suspected that he was on their trail. It always made Mr. Wolf feel mean. He never could hold his head and his tail up after that kind of a hunt. He felt so like a sneak that he just had to put his tail between his legs for very shame. There was nothing to be proud about in such a hunt.

"One night he sat thinking about it. Gentle Mistress Moon looked down at him through the treetops, and something inside him urged him to tell her his troubles. He pointed his sharp nose up at her, opened his mouth and, because she was so far away, did his best to make her hear. That was the very first Wolf howl ever heard. There was something very lonely and shivery and terrible in the sound, and all who heard it shook with fear. Mr. Wolf didn't know this, but he did know that

he felt better for howling. So every night he pointed his nose up at Mistress Moon and howled.

"It happened that once as he did this, a Deer jumped at the first sound and rushed away in great fright. This gave Mr. Wolf an idea. The next day when he went hunting he threw up his head and howled at the very first smell of fresh tracks. That day he had the longest hunt he ever had known, for the Deer had had fair warning. Mr. Wolf didn't get the Deer, because the latter swam across a lake and so got away, but he returned home in high spirits in spite of an empty stomach. You see, he felt that it had been a fair hunt. After that he always gave fair warning. As he ran, he howled for very joy. No longer did he carry his bushy tail between his legs, for no longer did he feel like a coward and a sneak. Instead, he carried it proudly. Of all the animals who hunted, he was the only one who gave fair warning, and he felt that he had a right to be proud. All the others hunted by stealth. He alone hunted openly and boldly.

Old King Bear, who was king no longer, would growl a deep, rumble grumbly growl. "Now this earned for him first the dislike and then the hatred of the other hunters. You see, when he was hunting, he spoiled the hunting of those who stole soft-footed through the Green Forest and caught their victims by surprise.

The little people heard his voice and either hid away or were on guard, so that it was hard work for the silent hunters to surprise them. At the sound of his hunting cry, old King Bear, who was king no longer, would growl a deep, rumble grumbly growl, though he didn't mind so much as some, because he did very little hunting. He wouldn't have done any if food had not been so scarce, because he would have been entirely satisfied with berries and roots, if he could have found enough.

Mr. Lynx and Mr. Panther would snarl angrily. Mr. Coyote and Mr. Fox would show their teeth and mutter about what they would do to Mr. Wolf if only they were big enough and strong enough and brave enough.

"Of course, it wasn't long before Mr. Wolf discovered that he had no friends. The little people feared him, and the big people hated him because he spoiled their hunting. But he didn't mind. In fact, he looked down on Mr. Lynx and Mr. Panther and Mr. Coyote and Mr. Fox, and when he met them, he lifted his tail a



little more proudly than ever. Sometimes he would howl out of pure mischief just to spoil the hunting of the others. So, little by little, he began to be spoken of as Howler the Wolf, and after a while everybody called him Howler.

"Of course, Howler taught his children how to hunt and that the only honorable and fair way was to give those they hunted fair warning. So it grew to be a fixed habit of the Wolf family to give fair warning that they were abroad and then trust to their wind and wits and speed and noses to catch those they were after. The result was that they grew strong, able to travel long distances, keen of nose, and sharp of wit. Because the big people hated them, and the little people feared them, they lived by themselves and so formed the habit of hunting together for company.

"It has been so ever since, and the name Howler has been handed down to this day. No sound in all the Great Woods carries with it more fear than does the voice

of Howler the Wolf, and no one hunts so openly, boldly, and honorably. Be thankful, Peter, that Howler never comes down to the Green Forest, but stays far from the homes of men."

"I am," replied Peter. "Just the same, I think he deserves a better name for the fair way in which he hunts, though his name certainly does fit him. I would a lot rather be caught by someone who had given me fair warning than by someone who came sneaking after me and gave me no warning. But I don't want to be caught at all, so I think I'll hurry back to the dear Old Briar-patch." And Peter did.



Billy Mink's Swimming Party



Billy Mink was coming down the bank of the Laughing Brook. Billy Mink was feeling very good indeed. He had had a good breakfast, the sun was warm, little white cloud ships were sailing across the blue sky and their shadows were sailing across the Green Meadows, the birds were singing and the bees were humming. Billy Mink felt like singing too, but Billy Mink's voice was not meant for singing.

Billy Mink's Swimming Party Preview



Jenisa Washington

By and by Billy Mink came to the Smiling Pool. Here the Laughing Brook stopped and rested on its way to join the Big River. It stopped its noisy laughing and singing and just lay smiling and smiling in the warm sunshine. The little flowers on the bank leaned over and nodded to it. The beech tree, which was very old, sometimes dropped a leaf into it. The cattails kept their feet cool in the edge of it.

Billy Mink jumped out on the Big Rock and looked down into the Smiling Pool. Over on a green lily pad he saw old Grandfather Frog.

"Hello, Grandfather Frog," said Billy Mink.

"Hello, Billy Mink," said Grandfather Frog. "What mischief are you up to this fine sunny morning?"

Just then Billy Mink saw a little brown head swimming along one edge of the Smiling Pool.

"Hello, Jerry Muskrat!" shouted Billy Mink.

"Hello your own self, Billy Mink," shouted Jerry Muskrat. "Come in and have a swim; the water's fine!"

"Good," said Billy Mink. "We'll have a swimming party."

So Billy Mink called all the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind, who were playing with the flowers on the bank, and sent them to find Little Joe Otter and invite him to come to the swimming party. Pretty soon back came the Little Breezes, and with them came Little Joe Otter.

"Hello, Billy Mink," said Little Joe Otter. "Here I am!"

"Hello, Little Joe Otter," said Billy Mink. "Come up here on the Big Rock and see who can dive the deepest into the Smiling Pool."

So Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat climbed upon the Big Rock beside Billy Mink, and they all stood side by side in their little brown bathing suits looking down into the Smiling Pool.

"Now when I count three we'll all dive into the Smiling Pool together and see who can dive the deepest. "One!" said Billy Mink. "Two!" said Billy Mink. "Three!" said Billy Mink.

And when he said "Three," in they all went headfirst. My, such a splash as they did make! They upset old Grandfather Frog so that he fell off his lily pad. They frightened Mr. and Mrs. Trout so that they jumped right out of the water. Tiny Tadpole had such a scare that he hid way, way down in the mud, with only the tip of his funny little nose sticking out.

"Chug-arum," said old Grandfather Frog, climbing out of his lily pad. "If I wasn't so old I would show you how to dive."

"Come on, Grandfather Frog!" cried Billy Mink. "Show us how to dive."

And what do you think? Why, old Grandfather Frog actually got so excited that he climbed up on the Big Rock to show them how to dive. Splash! went Grandfather Frog into the Smiling Pool. Splash! went Billy Mink right behind him. Splash! Splash! went Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat, right at Billy Mink's heels.

"Hurrah!" shouted Mr. Kingfisher, sitting on a branch of the old beach tree. And then, just to show them that he could dive, too, splash! he went into the Smiling Pool.

Such a noise as they did make! All the Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind danced for joy on the bank. Blacky the Crow and Sammy Jay flew over to see what was going on.

"Now let's see who can swim the farthest under water," cried Billy Mink.

So they all stood side by side on one edge of the Smiling Pool.

"Go!" shouted Mr. Kingfisher, and in they all plunged.

Little ripples ran across the Smiling Pool, and then the water became as smooth and smiling as if nothing had gone into it with a plunge.

Now old Grandfather Frog began to realize that he wasn't as young as he used to be, and he couldn't swim as fast as the others anyway. He began to get short of

breath, so he swam up to the top and stuck just the tip of his nose out to get some more air. Sammy Jay's sharp eyes saw him.

"There's Grandfather Frog!" he shouted.

So then Grandfather Frog popped his head out and swam over to his green lily pad to rest.

Way over beyond the Big Rock little bubbles in three long rows kept coming up to the top of the Smiling Pool. They showed just where Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat were swimming way down out of sight. It was the air from their lungs making the bubbles. Straight across the Smiling Pool went the lines of little bubbles, and then, way out on the farther side, two little heads bobbed out of the water close together. They were Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter. A moment later Jerry Muskrat bobbed up beside them.

You see, they had swum clear across the Smiling Pool and of course they could swim no farther.

So Billy Mink's swimming party was a great success



Johnny Chuck Finds the Best Thing in the World



Old Mother West Wind had stopped to talk with the Slender Fir Tree.

"I've just come across the Green Meadows," said Old Mother West Wind, "and there I saw the Best Thing in the World."

Johnny Chuck
Finds...Preview



Walton Goggins

Striped Chipmunk was sitting under the Slender Fir Tree and he couldn't help hearing what Old Mother West Wind said.

"The Best Thing in the World - now what can that be?" thought Striped Chipmunk. "Why, it must be heaps and heaps of nuts and acorns! I'll go and find it."

So Striped Chipmunk started down the Lone Little Path through the wood as fast as he could run. Pretty soon he met Peter Rabbit.

"Where are you going in such a hurry, Striped Chipmunk?" asked Peter Rabbit.

"Down in the Green Meadows to find the Best Thing in the World," replied Striped Chipmunk, and ran faster.

"The Best Thing in the World," said Peter Rabbit. "Why, that must be a great pile of carrots and cabbage! I think I'll go and find it."

So Peter Rabbit started down the Lone Little Path through the wood as fast as he could go after Striped Chipmunk.

As they passed the great hollow tree Bobby Coon put his head out. "Where are you going in such a hurry" asked Bobby Coon.

"Down in the Green Meadows to find the Best Thing in the World!" shouted Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit, and both began to run faster.



"The Best Thing in the World," said Bobby Coon to himself. "Why, that must be a whole field of sweet milky corn. I think I'll go and find it."

So Bobby Coon climbed down out of the great hollow tree and started down the Lone Little Path through the wood as fast as he could go after Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit, for there is nothing that Bobby Coon likes to eat so well as sweet milky corn.

At the edge of the wood they met Jimmy Skunk. "Where are you going in such a hurry?" asked Jimmy Skunk.

"Down in the Green Meadows to find the Best Thing in the World!" shouted Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit and Bobby Coon. Then they all tried to run faster.

"The Best Thing in the World," said Jimmy Skunk. "Why, that must be packs and packs of beetles!" And for once in his life Jimmy Skunk began to hurry down the Lone Little Path after Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit and Bobby Coon.

They were all running so fast that they didn't see Reddy Fox until he jumped out of the long grass and asked: "Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"To find the Best Thing in the World!" shouted Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit and Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk, and each did his best to run faster.

"The Best Thing in the World," said Reddy Fox to himself. "Why, that must be a whole pen full of tender young chickens, and I must have them."



So away went Reddy Fox as fast as he could run down the Lone Little Path after Striped Chipmunk, Peter Rabbit, Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk. By and by they all came to the house of Johnny Chuck.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" asked Johnny Chuck. "To find the Best Thing in the World," shouted Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit and Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk and Reddy Fox.

"The Best Thing in the World," said Johnny Chuck. "Why, I don't know of anything better than my own little home and the warm sunshine and the beautiful blue sky."

So Johnny Chuck stayed at home and played all day among the flowers with the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind and was as happy as could be.

But all day long Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit and Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk and Reddy Fox ran this way and ran that way over the Green Meadows trying to find the Best Thing in the World. The sun was very, very warm and they ran so far and they ran so fast that they were very, very hot and tired, and still they hadn't found the Best Thing in the World.

When the long day was over they started up the Lone Little Path past Johnny Chuck's house to their own homes. They didn't hurry now, for they were so very, very tired! And they were cross - oh so cross! Striped Chipmunk hadn't found a single nut. Peter Rabbit hadn't found so much as the leaf of a cabbage. Bobby Coon hadn't found the tiniest bit of sweet milky corn. Jimmy Skunk hadn't seen a single beetle. Reddy Fox hadn't heard so much as the peep of a chicken. And all were as hungry as hungry could be.

Halfway up the Lone Little Path they met Old Mother West Wind going to her home behind the hill. "Did you find the Best Thing in the World?" asked Old Mother West Wind.

"No!" shouted Striped Chipmunk and Peter Rabbit and Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk and Reddy Fox all together.

"Johnny Chuck has it," said Old Mother West Wind. "It is being happy with the things you have and not wanting things which someone else has. And it is called Contentment."





Why Old Man Coyote Has Many Voices



Of course Old Man Coyote has only one voice, but that one is such a wonderful voice that he can make it sound like a great many voices, all yelping and howling and shouting and laughing at the same time. So those who hear him always say that he has many voices, and that certainly is the way it seems. The first time Peter Rabbit heard Old Man Coyote, he was sure, absolutely sure, that there was a whole crowd of strangers on the Green Meadows, and you may be sure that he kept very close to his dear Old

Briar-patch. If you had been there and tried to tell Peter that all that noise was made by just one voice, he wouldn't have believed you. No, Sir, he wouldn't have believed you. And you couldn't have blamed him.

**Why Old Man
Coyote Has
Many Voices
Preview**



Dom Monaghan

It was the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind who first told Peter who the stranger was and warned him to watch out, because Old Man Coyote is just as fond of Rabbit as Granny or Reddy Fox, and is even more crafty and sly than they. Peter thanked the Merry Little Breezes for the warning, and then he asked them how many of his family Old Man Coyote had brought with him. Of course the Merry Little Breezes told Peter that Old Man Coyote was all alone, and they became very indignant when Peter laughed at them. He just couldn't help it.

"Why," said he, "every night I hear a whole crowd yelping and howling together."

"But you don't!" insisted the Merry Little Breezes. "It is Old Man Coyote alone who makes all that noise."

"Don't you suppose I know what I hear?" demanded Peter.

"No!" retorted the Merry Little Breezes. "You may have big ears and be able to hear a great deal, sometimes a great deal more than you have any business to hear, but you are old enough by this time to have learned that you cannot believe all you hear." And with that the Merry Little Breezes indignantly raced away to spread the news all over the Green Meadows.

Now Peter was quite as indignant because they thought he couldn't or shouldn't believe his own ears, as they were because he wouldn't believe what they told him, and all the rest of that



day he couldn't put the matter out of his mind. He was still thinking of it as the Black Shadows came creeping down from the Purple Hills across the Green Meadows. Suddenly Peter saw a dark form skulking among the Black Shadows. At first he thought it was Reddy Fox, only somehow it looked bigger. Peter, safe in the dear Old Briar-patch, watched. Presently the dark form came out from among the Black Shadows where Peter could see it clearly, sat down, pointed a sharp nose up at the first twinkling little stars, opened a big mouth, and out of it poured such a yelping and howling as made Peter shiver with fright. And now Peter had to believe his eyes rather than his ears. His ears told him that there were many voices, but his eyes told him that all that dreadful sound was coming out of one mouth. It was hard, very hard, to believe, but it was so.

"The Merry Little Breezes were right," muttered Peter to himself, as Old Man Coyote trotted away in the direction of the Green Forest, and he felt a wee bit ashamed to think that he had refused to believe them.

After that, Peter could think of nothing but Old Man Coyote's wonderful voice that sounded like many voices, and at the very first opportunity he hurried over to the Smiling Pool to ask Grandfather Frog what it meant.

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog. "It means simply that Old Man Coyote comes of a very smart family, and that he knows how to make the most of the gift of Old Mother Nature to his grandfather a thousand times removed."

This sounded so much like a story that Peter straightway teased Grandfather Frog to tell him all about it. At last, to get rid of him and enjoy a little quiet and peace, Grandfather Frog did so.

"Chug-a-rum!" he began, as he always does. "The great-great-ever-so-great grandfather of Old Man Coyote, who lived long, long ago when the world was young, was very much as Old Man Coyote is today. He was just as smart and just as clever. Indeed, he was smart enough and clever enough not to let his neighbors know that he was smart and clever at all. Those were very peaceful times at first, and everybody was on the best of terms with everybody else, as you know. There was plenty to eat without the trouble to steal, and everybody was honest simply be-



cause it was easier to be honest than it was to be dishonest. So Old King Bear ruled in the Green Forest, and everybody was happy and contented.

"But there came a time when food was scarce, and it was no longer easy to get plenty to eat. It was then that the stronger began to steal from the weaker, and by and by even to prey upon those smaller than themselves. The times grew harder and harder, and because hunger is a hard and cruel master, it made the larger and stronger people hard and cruel, too. Some of them it made very sly and cunning, like old Mr. Fox. Mr. Coyote was another whom it made sly and cunning. He was smart in the first place, even smarter than Mr. Fox, and he very early made up his mind that if he would live, it must be by his wits, for he wasn't big enough or strong enough to fight with his neighbors such as his big cousin, Mr. Timber Wolf, or Mr. Lynx, or Mr. Panther or Old King Bear, who was king no longer. And yet he liked the same things to eat.

"So he used to study and plan how he could outwit them without danger to himself. 'A whole skin is better than a full stomach, but both a whole skin and a full stomach are better still,' said he to himself; as he thought and schemed. For a while he was content to catch what he could without danger to himself, and to eat what his bigger and stronger neighbors left when they happened to get more than they wanted for themselves. Little by little he got the habit of slyly following them when they were hunting, always keeping out of sight. In this way, he managed to

get many meals of scraps. But these scraps never wholly satisfied him, and his mouth used to water as he watched the others feast on the very best when they had had a successful hunt.

He knew it wouldn't be of the least use to go out and boldly ask for some, for in those hard times everybody was very, very selfish.

"The times grew harder and harder, until it seemed as if Old Mother Nature had wholly forgotten her little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. Mr. Coyote still managed to pick up a living, but he was hungry most of the time, and the less he had to put in his stomach, the sharper his wits grew. At last one day, as he stole soft-footed through the Green Forest, he discovered Mr. Lynx having a great feast. To keep still and watch him was almost more than Mr. Coyote could stand, for he was so hungry that it seemed as if the sides of his stomach almost met, it was so empty.

"If I could make myself into three, we could take that dinner away from Mr. Lynx!" thought he, and right on top of that thought came a great idea. Why not make Mr. Lynx think he had a lot of friends with him? It would do no harm to try. So Mr. Coyote put his nose up in the air and howled. Mr. Lynx looked up and grinned. He had no fear of Mr. Coyote. Then Mr. Coyote hurried around to the other side of Mr. Lynx, all the time keeping out of sight, and howled again, and this time he tried to make his voice sound different. Mr. Lynx stopped eating and looked up a little surprised. 'I wonder if Mr. Coyote has got a brother with him,' thought he. A minute later Mr. Coyote howled again from the place where he had howled in the first place. 'He certainly has,' thought Mr. Lynx, 'but I'm a match for two of them,' and once more he went on eating.

"Then Mr. Coyote began to run in a circle around Mr. Lynx, always keeping out of sight in the thick brush, and every few steps he yelped or howled, and each yelp or howl he tried to make sound different. Now Mr. Coyote could run very fast, and he ran now as hard as ever he could in a big circle, yelping and howling and making his voice sound as different as possible each time. Mr. Lynx grew anxious and lost his appetite. 'Mr. Coyote must have a whole crowd of brothers,' thought he. 'I guess this is no place for me!' With that he started to sneak away.

"Mr. Coyote followed him, still trying to make his voice sound like the voices of many. Mr. Lynx gave a hurried look over his shoulder and began to run. Mr. Coyote kept after him, yelping and howling, until he was sure that Mr. Lynx was so frightened that he wouldn't dare come back.

Then Mr. Coyote returned to the dinner Mr. Lynx had left, and ate and ate until he couldn't hold another mouthful. His throat was very raw and sore because he had strained it trying to make his voice change so often, but he didn't mind this, because, you know, it felt so good to have all he could eat at one time once more.

"Now it just happened that Old Mother Nature had come along just in time to see and hear Mr. Coyote, and it tickled her so to think that Mr. Coyote had been so smart that what do you think she did? Why, while he slept that night, she healed his sore throat, and she gave him a new voice; and this voice was very wonderful, for it sounded for all the world like many voices, all yelping and howling at the same time. After that, all Mr. Coyote had to do when he wanted to frighten someone bigger and stronger than himself was to open his mouth and send forth his new voice, which sounded like many voices.

"So he had plenty to eat from that time on. And all his children and his children's children had that same wonderful voice, just as Old Man Coyote has now. Chug-a-rum! Now scamper home, Peter Rabbit, and see that you don't let Old Man Coyote's sharp wits get you into trouble."

"Thank you, Grandfather Frog!" cried Peter and scampered as fast as he could go for the dear, safe Old Briar-patch.